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C O N F I D E N T I A L ROME 002590

SIPDIS

USEU FOR POL - LITZENBURGER

E.O. 12958: DECL: 07/02/2014

TAGS: [PHUM](#) [PREL](#) [SY](#) [IT](#) [HUMAN RIGHTS](#)

SUBJECT: ITALY WELCOMES US CONCERN OVER HUMAN RIGHTS IN SYRIA

REF: STATE 142629

CLASSIFIED BY: A/POLMINCOUNS GARY ROBBINS. REASON: 1.4 (B)(D)

[1](#)1. (C) MFA SYRIA DESK OFFICER ALESSANDRA PASTORELLI TOLD POLOFF THAT ITALY WELCOMES US CONCERNS OVER THE RECENT UPTICK IN POLITICALLY RELATED DETENTIONS IN SYRIA. THE SUBJECT HAS BEEN DISCUSSED IN DEPTH AT EU MIDDLE EAST WORKING GROUP (COMEM) MEETINGS IN BRUSSELS. AT NEXT WEEK'S COMEM, ITALY WILL RAISE THE CASE OF HUMAN RIGHTS ACTIVIST AKTHAM NAISSA, CURRENTLY UNDER DETENTION AND WHO, ITALY BELIEVES, IS SUFFERING FROM POOR HEALTH. DURING ITS EU PRESIDENCY, ITALY SENT OBSERVERS TO TRIALS OF HUMAN RIGHTS ACTIVISTS IN SYRIA, AND IRELAND CONTINUED THE PRACTICE DURING ITS TENURE.

[1](#)2. (C) PASTORELLI SAID THAT BASED ON THE MFA'S AND EU'S EXPERIENCE DEALING WITH THE REGIME IN DAMASCUS, A FIRM BUT QUIET APPROACH WAS MORE EFFECTIVE THAN HIGH PROFILE PUBLIC STATEMENTS. SHE UNDERLINED THAT THE EU WILL CONTINUE TO USE THE LEVERAGE EMBODIED IN THE BARCELONA PROCESS AND NEGOTIATIONS FOCUSED ON THE EU-SYRIA ASSOCIATION AGREEMENT TO HELP CREATE AN ENVIRONMENT MORE RESPECTFUL OF HUMAN RIGHTS AND GENERAL DEMOCRATIC PRINCIPLES.

VISIT ROME'S CLASSIFIED WEBSITE:

[HTTP://WWW.STATE.SGOV.GOV/P/EUR/ROME/INDEX.CF](http://www.state.sgov.gov/p/eur/rome/index.cf) M

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